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Poems



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# POEMS

MARY NEWMARCH PRESCOTT



RICHARD G. BADGER

THE GORHAM PRESS

BOSTON

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*To*  
*Katharine Prescott Moseley*



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## OVER A GRAVE

Though underneath the silent clod  
Thy body rests—thy soul with God  
Doth mount on wings of prayer and praise  
To swell the measure of thy days.

Even though the grass is tall and green,  
That grows thy heart and mine between,  
Even though thy face be hid from me,  
My Father's will I clearly see.

## INVOCATION

Oh, sweet Romance, let me know  
If by any rhyme or reason  
I can woo you, that you blow  
In my garden every season!  
Tell me what the soil you need,  
What cool showers, what April weather;  
If like any common seed  
You put up a pale green feather?  
Though a hundred years are vaunted  
To perfect the aloe flower,  
You, dear Romance, most undaunted,  
Bloom a hundred times an hour.  
And though bay-leaves crown the brave  
While the myrtle's for the poet,  
Plant immortal, I would crave  
Seed of thee that I might sow it  
Broadcast, round my wicket-gate,  
Till—wide-spreading, multiplying,  
Ingress to dull care denying—  
I might sit the world defying,  
Through my mood, my state belying,  
Learning gayly how to wait.

Hark! through all the crystal pauses  
Breaks the treble of thy leaves;  
Silverest of silvery noises,  
Tapping at my cottage eaves,  
When the wandering winds are tired—  
Till one more than half believes,  
Sighs some weary-hearted Dryad  
Whom the daily sun deceives.  
Yet when morn is just beginning  
To foretell its grand surprise,  
Through thy boughs what chorus ringing,

What chatoyant splendors winging—  
Splendors caught from sunrise skies  
Wedded with celestial singing—  
Singing birds of Paradise.

For me, never, never lonely  
Days nor nights, if thou wilt only  
Not delay thy spring-tide budding,  
Nor forget the June-day flooding  
Of my ways with subtlest fragrance,  
Calling home the wingèd vagrants  
That from memory vanished quite  
Out of hearing, out of sight,  
Lose in the uncertain distance  
Claim to true shape or existence.

Through thy tendrils, sky-aspiring,  
Leaving little for desiring,  
Let me hear the tempest's choiring,  
Mellowed to the flute's respiring:  
Let the sunbeam's warm embrace  
With thy being interlace,  
Leading by a shining clew  
Heavenward to the quiet blue:  
Let the rainbow's bridge of sighs,  
Which the earth to heaven allies,  
Touch thee into a disguise  
Radiant as the dragon-fly's.

Can it be that storms may splinter  
All thy strength some cruel winter?  
That some wild and bleak New Year  
Bring thee but a frozen tear;  
So when little May winds shiver  
Thou wilt make no answering quiver

Oh, be ever green and growing,  
No repulse thy spirit knowing!  
Like the noble Banyan tree  
Tenant of the soil, but free!  
With thy magic seed shed wide  
On laden west-wind, laden tide,  
Each ripe harvest loosely cast  
And borne upon each flying blast,  
Daily journey everywhere  
That the great heroic dare.  
Wandering now to farther Greenland  
And the coasts of the Unseen land;  
Into chilliest regions going—  
Regions of perpetual snowing;  
Striking latitudes that smile  
Into summer all the while,  
Blown across the open sea  
Of a vast humanity.

Where no other plant will flourish  
Thou thy rarest blossoms nourish!  
By the merest thread of bliss,  
By a whisper, by a kiss,  
Bid thy folded leaves expand,  
Beautifying all the land.  
In thy shade, that sunshine is,  
Let me taste of happiness;  
Oh, dear Romance, let me be  
Evermore at home with thee!

## THE OATEN PIPE

When the musical, piping frogs  
Begin to croak and chant,  
In the marshes and in the bogs,  
In many a sweet spring haunt:

I think of the legend, hoary,  
Which little Dutch folk recite,—  
How the nightingale's soul, says the story,  
Enters a frog in its flight.

And so when I hear the weird catch,  
Where the frogs alone take part,  
I fancy I sometimes snatch  
A strain from the nightingale's heart.

## THE DAYS OF A STORY

### I

#### THE SCENE

Soon the catkin's velvet tassels will be blowing,  
Soon the brimming brooks will call and shout;  
And the green grass will be growing, growing,  
And the crocus buds will all look out;

Soon the eager birds will come, with trill and  
whistle,

Little wings a-whirring through the air,  
Fetching wisp of hay, or down of thistle,  
Such as last year's harvest had to spare.

Soon anemones will show their startled faces,  
Violets will be pushing towards the light,  
Soon the leaves will steal into their places,  
And the fairy frost will take its flight.

Soon the dear earth will be set in all her order,  
Evening heavens bloom with tender spheres,  
Summer will come blushing o'er the border—  
Swift and meet her, Love and Joy and Tears!

### II

#### AT PLAY

Yesterday, upon my word,  
Hunting in the wood for spring,  
Suddenly I heard a bird  
Make the drowsy echoes ring.

And he sang out, "Surely surely,  
Lark and thrush are here anon.  
I have come along so early  
Just to see how things get on.

"Here and there a green leaf's peeping;  
Far and near the brooks are heard;  
Nature is not dead or sleeping,  
Busy she about her word."

Yesterday, upon my honor,  
When I thought the spring was cold,  
With her royal robes upon her,  
Came the crocus through the mould.

And she whispered, "Was I dreaming,—  
Some one seemed to call my name;  
Was it real? was it seeming?  
I put on my crown and came."

### III

#### THE JOY OF LIFE

West wind and sunshine  
Braided together;  
What is the one sign  
But pleasant weather?

Birds in the cherry trees,  
Bees in the clover;  
Who half so gay as these  
All the world over?

Strawberries in the grass,  
Roses regretting  
How soon the summer 'll pass,—  
Next year forgetting.

Buds sighing in their sleep,  
    “Summer, pray grant us  
Youth, that its bloom may keep  
    Fragrance to haunt us!”

Rivers that shine and sing,  
    Sunbeams abetting,—  
No more remembering  
    Their frozen fretting.

Music along the wind,  
    Sun in the showers;  
What more shall any find  
    In summer hours!

## IV

### FLOWER IN HAND

The daisy is fine and fair  
    With her golden crown on,  
And her tangle of lint white hair  
    And her green spring gown on.  
And morning and Maytime are stored  
    In deep horns of honey—  
If the bee steal the clover's hoard  
    The days are still sunny.  
The buttercup holds out her disk,  
    Atop of the grasses,  
To catch, at her waxen risk  
    The sunbeam that passes.  
But the dandelion's so bright,  
    One almost might fancy  
He was fashioned out of the light  
    By some necromancy.

How softly the south wind curled  
As it touched me this minute—  
Oh, how sweet is the world,  
How good to be in it!

## V

### THE NEW WISH

Glancing new moon, white new moon,  
What do you bring in your horn?  
Silver light to paint black night  
As fair as the early morn?

Shining new moon, sweet new moon,  
Where did you harvest your rays?  
In the deeps of dark were you never a spark  
Till the sun shone along your ways?

Sinking new moon, kind new moon,  
Will my wish come true some day,  
When you're but a ghost of yourself, at the  
most,  
And your glory passes away?

## VI

### UNREST

Cherry trees begin to blow,  
The crocus blossomed long ago;  
But the rose it lingers yet,  
With its buds already set.  
Rose, will you blossom soon, or no?

Lilacs all their purple show,  
Leaves unfold, and grow and grow;  
But the rose it stays behind,  
Waiting till the winds are kind.  
Rose, will you blossom soon, or no?

Violets flutter to and fro  
In the greening woods, I know;  
Yet a little, little longer  
Dreams the rose, till suns grow stronger:  
How long does it take a rose to grow?

## VII

### OH, HASTEN, YEAR!

Oh, hasten, year, to bring us June,  
Folded within your dreaming heart  
Like petals of a rose, that soon  
The wooing winds will kiss apart.

Hasten, O sun, across the sky,  
Nor make, I pray, a long delay;  
Let the sweet bloom of daylight die,  
And twilight stars forbid to stay;

Till wreathed in blossoms morn appears,  
Wasting her fragrance everywhere,  
And echoes of the chiming spheres  
Seem pulsing on the summer air.

## VIII

### FULL JUNE

By soft showers and sunlight fed,  
Nature's art discloses,

Pink and white, and royal red,  
A world of blushing roses.

Wandering at their own sweet will,  
They paint the dullest places,  
Or lean across the window-sill  
With love-compelling faces.

Such a grace about them clings,  
Such an odor hovers,  
That these wild and wayward things  
Count us all their lovers.

Bloom, O roses! rich and sweet;  
May no worm o'ertake you!  
June is only half complete  
Till the sunbeams wake you.

## IX

### THE CHOICE

Swift through the darkness  
The little boat goes;  
What is before us,  
Who cares, and who knows?

Low hang the branches  
That border the stream;  
Afloat in their shade,  
Do we wake, do we dream?

Could our flight through the twilight  
Continue for aye,  
Should we care for the sunlight,  
Or pine for the day?

Should I tire of the language  
    Of beautiful eyes,  
And weary of melody  
    Written in sighs?

If life were but floating  
    By one dear one's side.  
Should we long for the haven,  
    Or turn of the tide?

Still through the shadows  
    We grope to the sea:  
The world is before us,  
    And I, love, choose Thee!

## X

### IN THE DARK, IN THE DEW

In the dark, in the dew  
I am smiling back to you,  
But you cannot see the smile,  
And you're thinking all the while  
How I turn my face from you,  
In the dark, in the dew.

In the dark, in the dew  
All my love goes out to you,  
Flutters like a bird in pain,  
Dies and comes to life again,  
While you whisper, "Sweetest, hark,  
Some one's sighing in the dark,  
In the dark, in the dew!"

In the dark, in the dew,  
All my heart cries out to you,

As I cast it at your feet,  
Sweet, indeed, but not too sweet,  
Wondering will you hear it beat,  
Beat for you, and bleed for you,  
In the dark, in the dew!

## XI

### FOR YOU

If I were a violet, a sweet, white violet,  
Waiting for the sun and for the dew,  
Struggling through the cold springtime,  
Hard beset with cruel rime,  
I should surely blow for you.

If I were a rose, love, a great red-hearted rose,  
love,  
Blushing on my stem, as roses do,  
After tedious, sad delays,  
In the first, warm summer days,  
I would sweeten life for you.

If I were a daisy, a golden-hearted daisy,  
Shining in the field a season through,  
With my petals you should spell,  
That I love you, love you well.  
With my whole heart only you!

## XII

### STILL FOR YOU

If I were the white and morning star,  
Shining where the lesser planets are,

I would light you through your dreams  
With my fine and tender beams;  
You should hear the song that ran  
Through the earth when Peace began.

If I were a shell upon the shore  
I would murmur strange and sweet sea-  
lore  
Of fair mermaids that beguile  
Poor sailors, mile on mile—  
Of the ocean forests dim,  
Where strange fishes float and swim.

If I were the new and yellow moon  
I would grant your wishes soon, full soon;  
I would borrow for your sake  
Such splendor as would make  
Constellations fade away  
Like sad ghosts at break of day.

### XIII

#### A KISS

The day has smouldered in the west,  
Each bird long since has found its nest;  
But as for me, I am so blest  
I can not give myself to rest,  
Thinking, perforce, of only this—  
So slight a thing—his melting kiss.

He paused just here, outside the door;  
I thought to see his face no more;  
My heart was aching to the core.  
“Good-by”—he’d said it once before.  
“Through good-bys many a life’s undone.”

I spoke, "Why give me more than one?"  
He paused and turned, and gave me this—  
It burns yet on my mouth—his kiss!

My lips are sacred now henceforth,  
Perhaps before of little worth;  
They have grown precious through long dearth  
And waiting for this crown of earth.  
What hours I spent, nor dreamed of this.  
To find my whole world in a kiss!

## XIV

### SUMMER WEATHER

The corn is in tassel, the grass is high,  
Morning and evening echo with praise,  
Robins whistle and thrushes reply,  
Making the most of these holidays.

The silver birches are laughing out,  
An emerald plume lifts the sculptured fern,  
While thistle-blossoms begin to pout,  
And the wild red roses begin to burn.

Here they come trooping, now, one and all,  
Larkspur, and bluebell and gay marigold—  
Had they been waiting the fairy's call  
To spring from the dusk of the mould?

Look—the brown sparrow longs not to flutter  
With wings like the pansy's purple best,  
Nor the velvet pansy yearns to utter  
What the sparrow croons over her nest.

Steeped in the happy summer weather,  
Each content with its fortunate dower,

Life is enough, no matter whether  
One be a girl, a bird, or a flower!

## XV

### THE WHISPER

The birds heard it and straightway trilled it,  
Through meadow and copse, with a will;  
Down in the woodland they whistled and shrilled  
it,  
As if they would never be still.

The brook listened and caught the measure,  
Tinkling, tinkling over its bed,  
And kept repeating at its own wild pleasure,  
Sweetest words ever were said.

The winds, themselves, the burden carried,  
Set to the tune of the singing rain,  
And the morning stars in their courses, tarried,  
To echo the tender strain.

Brook, bird and wind, and stars a-singing,  
The music of all the spheres,  
O, sweeter then your melodious singing,  
Was his whisper in my ears.

## XVI

### TWILIGHT

The twilight gathers fair and fine  
Above the dimpling stream;  
The rosy colors shift and shine,

And all the shadowy world doth seem  
The picture of some happy dream.

Too soon, from darkening tide and shore,  
The vision melts away:  
To paint the heavenly spaces o'er  
No amethystine hues delay,  
Nor tender rose nor sapphire stay.

Yet not a tint will ever fade  
From the heaven where once it shone:  
Every sweet color there inlaid  
Perpetual has grown  
Since, in the trembling light, I made  
You, love, my own my own.

## XVII

### THE MESSAGE

Tell it, O wind, from morning till night,  
Whisper it, warble it, sound its delight,  
And you, O roses, beneath your blushes,  
Breathe it soon to the listening thrushes,  
And thrushes, be sure you carol it sweet,  
Till the echoes, themselves, are fain to repeat!

Oh, wandering tide, with your silver fret,  
Float it wherever your feet are set;  
And you, O sea, with your thunder tone,  
Pass it onward, from zone to zone,—  
And to all the earth the secret tell,  
That my lover, he loves me, he loves me well!

Bend down, O stars, in your shining courses,  
Lend to my song your eternal forces,  
Wherever you shine, o'er what worlds divine,

Proclaim that his love is mine, is mine,  
That he loves me a-near, and he loves me apart,  
Today, and forever, with all his heart!

## XVIII

### CONTENT

I should not care though spring delayed  
To lure wild flowers from woodland nooks,  
Though the rose within its calyx staid,  
And frosts detained the singing brooks,  
Though leaf nor rain-fed violet  
Showed where their fragrant feet were set,  
If you loved me still: should I repine  
Though spring-time made no sign?

I should not care though summer came  
With shining showers and balmy dew,  
Filling the world with perfumed flame,  
With her lilting bards and fairy crew  
Of rosy petals and wingèd seeds,  
With all her troop of prankish weeds,  
If you loved me not: why should I care  
Though heaven and earth were fair?

## XIX

### SPRING AND LOVE

The grasses all were lifeless, sere, and dry;  
Barren the boughs, where leaves had lent their  
shade;  
In every empty nest the snow heaped high  
And water-courses in their flight were stayed;

And all the dumb and stricken solitude  
Was like some undiscovered arctic zone,  
Where no flower grew, where no bird reared her  
brood;  
When presently, in silvery monotone,  
The frozen streams began to sing their chimes;  
As by some bold and swift enchantment wrought,  
Such as we read of, in far fairy climes,  
The fields and trees with green were overshot;  
For Spring had come. So, Love, when you are  
near,  
You change the whole world's frosty atmosphere.

## XX

### ECSTASY

What so sweet as summer,  
When the sky is blue,  
And the sunbeams' arrows  
Pierce the green earth through?

What so sweet as birds are,  
Putting into trills  
The perfume of the wild rose,  
The murmur of the rills?

What so sweet as flowers,  
Clovers white and red,  
Where the brown bee chemist  
Finds its daily bread?

What so sweet as sun showers,  
When the big cloud passes,  
And the fairy rainbow  
Seems to touch the grasses?

What so sweet as winds are,  
Blowing from the woods,  
Hinting in their music  
Of dreamy solitudes?

Rain, and song, and flower,  
When the summer's shine  
Make the green earth's beauty  
Seem a thing divine.

## XXI

### AN ANSWER

Shall I forget you, when long years have flown  
And all the loveliness that is your own  
Has into waste and withered wrinkles grown,  
And your eye's tremulous magnificence  
Is but a memory of the failing sense?  
Ah, while your heart is great, and God is good  
I cannot, love, forget you, if I would!

Shall I forget you? Oh when that shall be,  
I must have lost the light from land or sea,  
I must have closed my eyes eternally!  
For while my heart beats, or my spirit lives,  
'Mid all the hopes that gracious Heaven gives  
To love you still, as here on earth I love,  
Oh, this it is, that perfect Heaven to prove!

## XXII

### A TEAR

When the long green grass waves o'er me,  
And no summers are before me;  
When the bitter wind's increase

In no wise disturbs my peace,  
When the spring's sweet thrill, as once,  
Wakes in me no quick response,  
Will you, dear, in losing me,  
Lose the bloom of sky and sea?

When the brown bee's busy hum  
Does not reach me, cold and dumb;  
When the scent of the wild rose  
Breathes the sadness of repose,  
Where no tender voice is heard,  
Heart-sick sigh or whispered word;  
When for me all seasons fail,  
Will your love, sweet, still prevail?

Happier far the grave's seclusion,  
Where your love may seek intrusion,  
Than the summer's wasted sweetness  
Barren of that love's completeness,  
Mouldering underneath the sod,  
Waiting on the will of God,  
Heaven itself would yet seem near,  
Should you drop there, sweet, a tear!

### XXIII

#### SONG

##### I

Waken, birds, for the day is waking,  
And the sky is a sea of light;  
Waken, blossom, thy dreams forsaking,  
Now 'tis no longer night.

Waken, heart, and sing to His praise  
Who decrees that thou shouldst guess,

From the sacred blessing love brings always,  
Of heaven's deep blessedness!

## XXIV

### THE OLD STORY

By the pleasant paths we know  
All familiar flowers would grow,  
Though we two were gone;  
Moon and stars would rise and set,  
Dawn the haggard night forget,  
And the world move on.

Spring would carol through the wood,  
Life be counted sweet and good,  
While the seasons sped;  
Winter storms would prove their might,  
Winter frosts make bold to bite,  
Clouds lift overhead.

Still the sunset lights would glow,  
Still the heaven-appointed bow  
In its place be hung,  
Not one flower the less would bloom,  
Though we two had met our doom,  
No song less be sung.

Other lovers through the dew  
Would go loitering, two and two,  
When the day was done;  
Lips would pass the kiss divine,  
Hearts would beat like yours and mine—  
Hearts that beat as one.

## XXV

### DREAMS

Where shall we be, love, you and I,  
A hundred years from to-day, to-day?  
Blossoming out in the blue-eyed grasses,  
Borne on the breeze that loiters and passes,  
    On the cloud of gold or gray?  
One, or sundered, forever and aye?  
Will you not whisper, love, softly to me  
    From out the gloom where your dust reposes?  
And shall I not answer with all my heart,  
Though our graves be leagues and oceans apart?  
Shall I not long for smile or caressing,  
For the warm hand's touch and the warm lip's  
    blessing?  
Will our ashes regret when the summer closes,  
    Or thrill and stir at the time of roses?  
Where are the friends of a century gone—  
    Where are they all to-day, to-day?  
Singing about the heavenly throne,  
Garnering in the love they have sown,  
Or a handful of dust by the wild winds blown?  
    A hundred years from to-day, to-day,  
    Love, we shall be as they!

## XXVI

### REVERIE

Slipping, drifting, with the tide,  
    All the summer twilight through,  
As in heaven the stars abide  
    In my heart do dreams of you.

Echoes following from the shore  
Seem the chorus of our song,  
Summer odors, blown before  
Float the tranquil tune along.

Shall we linger till the day  
Paints the earth a thing divine?  
Spread the sail and haste away  
Where the distant breakers shine?

Held within their fearful grasp,  
Would they crush us like a shell?  
Dying, dearest, in your clasp,  
All would yet be well!

## XXVII

### INCONSTANCY

When the spring-time came, I said,  
“Spring, I love you—love you best.”  
Columbines were gold and red,  
Winds flowers hung each timid head;  
By warm rains and sunshine fed  
Every root was comforted,  
Every slumbering leaf was guessed  
“Spring,” I vowed, “I love you best!”

When the summer came, I said,  
“Summer, dear, I love you most.”  
Butterflies their wide wings spread;  
Crowds of starry daisies sped  
Where their wandering seeds were led;  
Shining planets overhead  
Through the heavenly spaces fled.  
Spring was but a lovely ghost—  
“Summer, dear, I love you most!”

## XXVIII

### ON THE RIVER

Oh, loose the boat and ply the oar,  
And let us drift forever  
Adown this blue enameled floor,  
This happy, flowing river.

The shore unwinds a ribbon green;  
The hills smoke blue and tender,  
And far away tall spires between  
Are touched with flying splendor.

The sweet wind travels just our way,  
Contented to remind us  
Of clover-fields and new-mown hay  
Left far enough behind us.

And now and then, so faintly heard,  
Sweet sounds come trembling over,  
Of pealing bell and singing bird,  
Of screaming gull or plover.

The sunbeam sees itself below,  
Reflected in the river—  
So, dearest, in my heart, you know,  
You are reflected ever!

## XXIX

### CLOUDS

Sometimes there's a flock of sheep  
Traveling landward, where the grass  
Grows so green and fresh and deep,  
They might crop it as they pass.

Sometimes there's a school of fish,  
Slowly swimming out to sea,  
Perch or mackerel, as you wish,  
Scales as bright as scales can be.

Now a castle rises there,  
Broken casements, turrets rent;  
Here a bit of crazy stair,  
Or a ruined battlement.

And anon, a mountain peak  
Shines beneath eternal snows,  
Where the venturous might seek  
For the little Alpine rose.

Or, perchance, a face looks out,  
Like a seraph's faint and far,  
Just to see what we're about,  
In this distant star!

### XXX

#### ONCE A YEAR

Summer is here in all her glory  
Of waving grasses and fragrant shoot  
Spelling her swift and beautiful story  
With scarlet lily, with wayside fruit.

Down in green hollows of woody places  
The sunbeams beckon the orchid out,  
White thorn blossoms unveil their faces  
Swelling pods are beginning to pout.

Breezes blow from the gardens of spices  
Bees make murmuring long delays,

The musical laugh of the brook entices  
Lover and lover to follow her ways.

Stay, dear morning, nor yet bereave us!  
Why need your blossoms grow sad and sere?  
Linger a little or e'er you leave us,  
Since you come only once a year!

Stay, where the boughs of the bending beeches  
Shadow the stream in a single spot,  
And gild me forever these azure reaches,  
Reaches of wild forget-me-not!

### XXXI

### TODAY

Today the sunshine freely showers  
Its benediction where we stand;  
There's not a passing cloud that lowers  
Above this pleasant summer-land:  
Then let's not waste the sweet today—  
Tomorrow, who can say?

Perhaps tomorrow we may be  
(Alas! alas! the thought is pain!)  
As far apart as sky and sea,  
Sundered, to meet no more again:  
Then let us clasp thee, sweet today—  
Tomorrow, who can say?

The daylight fades; a purple dream  
Of twilight hovers overhead,  
While all the trembling stars do seem  
Like sad tears yet unshed:  
Oh, sweet today, so soon away!  
Tomorrow, who can say?

## XXXII

### AT PAUSE

The sunbeams fall in a golden shower  
    Across the yellowing vines,  
The fruit, over-ripe, drops hour by hour,  
    And the michaelmas daisy shines.

But where is the meadows' emerald green  
    And the wide wild sunflowers' glow,  
Lost in the lift of the salt sea-sheen  
    Where the singing breezes go?

A pensive hush broods like a charm  
    Over the land and the sea,  
A pause in the full year's choral psalm,  
    An unuttered melody.

The thistles have given up the ghost,  
    And the forests have turned to gold,  
And the summer's eloquent story, at most,  
    Is but a tale that is told.

The rose to the wind has given her breath,  
    The bird has bequeathed his lay,  
And I have given my heart till death,  
    And after the judgment-day.

Then what care I though the fields be brown,  
    And the violet's eyes be hid,  
Summer for me has woven a crown  
    To wear and be comforted.

### **XXXIII**

#### **TWO MOODS**

I plucked the harebells as I went  
Singing along the river-side;  
The skies above were opulent  
Of sunshine "Ah, whate'er betide,  
The world is sweet, is sweet," I cried,  
That morning by the river-side.

The curlews called along the shore;  
The boats swept from the sandy beach;  
Afar I heard the breakers' roar  
Mellowed to silver-sounding speech;  
And still I sang it o'er and o'er,  
"The world is sweet forevermore!"

Perhaps today some other one,  
Loitering along the river-side,  
Content beneath the gracious sun,  
May sing again, "Whate'er betide,  
The world is sweet," I shall not chide,  
Although my song is done.

### **XXXIV**

#### **LAST YEAR**

Last year, when roses were in bloom,  
When flag-flowers dyed the river-banks,  
When every gracious thing had room,  
To feel the sun and render thanks;

When winds went blowing out to sea  
Loaded with clover-scented balms,

And in their soaring minstrelsy,  
Seemed echoes of rejoicing psalms;  
  
When wave on wave, the tide returned,—  
A siren singing on the sand;—  
I, waiting, with my whole heart yearned  
To hear his boat's keel touch the land;  
  
I, waiting, wasted half the night,  
Faint grew the planets, pale and far;  
For him, a fairer morning light,  
Dawned with the tender morning star.

### XXXV

#### IN SUN AND SHADE

We walked together on the sand:  
The lazy tide was fretting;  
The wind blew sweetly from the land;  
The summer sun was setting.

Lonely and long the white beach lay  
Beneath the sunset's flushing;  
The breakers, near and far away,  
All their white tumult hushing.

A cruel wreck upon the shore  
Spoke of the storm's wild doing:  
We dreamed no tempest evermore  
Could blight our summer's wooing.

One star was trembling into light,  
In that wide heaven showing;  
One thought within our hearts that night  
Exceeding sweet was growing.

We walked, and spoke as lovers will,  
In voices hushed and tender,  
Of hopes the future should fulfill,  
Of blessings Heaven would render!

I walk the lonesome beach today:  
The tide is still returning;  
The fishing boats at anchor stay;  
The sunset fires are burning.

But tides may ebb and tides may flow,  
And breakers flash and thunder;  
Unheeding of them all I know  
He sleeps their tumult under.

He sleeps—nor sin nor aching age  
Shall chill his youth's endeavor:  
The years of God his heritage  
Forever and forever.

## XXXVI

### CHANGE

Dun fields, where bloom was lately,  
And a silence in the air.  
Save where some bird sedately  
Whistles a note here or there:  
As, if, like me, recalling  
A vision of vanished springs,  
While the dead leaves floating and falling  
Seem their broken and bruised wings.

So lately the fields were growing  
Into their golden green;  
So lately the farmer was sowing

The long brown furrows between;  
So lately my heart was singing  
With the birds that began to build,  
With jubilant hope was ringing,  
With jubilant love was filled!

Now I cry out in my sorrow,  
And no one answers my moan;  
To-morrow will come, and to-morrow  
Find me and leave me alone.  
There's never a spring at whose waking  
My pulses will thrill as before;  
Shall a heart sing that is breaking?  
Were it blessed, it could scarcely do more!

### XXXVII

#### A SONG (2)

'Tis not the murmuring voice of Spring  
That stirs my heart and makes me sing;  
'Tis not the blue skies, bubbling o'er  
With sunshine spilled along earth's floor;  
Nor yet the flush of bursting rose,  
Nor bloom of any flower that grows.

It is that long, long time ago,  
When all the world was blushing so—  
It is that then my cheek blushed too,  
My heart beat fast for love and you:  
There was a music in the air  
I fail to find now anywhere.

And so, when Spring comes wandering by,  
I lose the thread of misery;  
Trusting the promise of her days,

I tune my voice to sing her praise,  
And cheat myself with the sweet pain  
That in the spring Love blooms again.

### XXXVIII

#### ANOTHER SPRING

“I know the orchards are in bloom,” she said,  
“That in the meadows all the grass is deep,  
That dimpling streams far oceanward are led,  
Though through the pleasant fields they seem  
to creep,  
Among the blue flags and the stately rushes,  
While in the alders loudly sing the thrushes.

“I know the daisies drift like winter snow,  
And ragged lilac boughs inherit wealth;  
That golden tassels on the barberry grow,  
And violets quicken in the sod by stealth;  
I know that white and purple clovers wave  
As sweet a flower, though grown upon a grave.

“And yet I have no heart to rise and look,  
However much the sun illuminates  
This fairest page of Nature’s ample book,  
From which the same sweet meaning radiates  
As when before the meadows were a-blush,  
And grove and hedge re-echoed to the thrush.

“What pleasure can I take in the old lore  
When eyes that read with me are closed and  
blind,  
And mark no more changes on wood or shore,

Nor care, perchance, for sweet things left behind—  
What time the apple boughs are wreathed and bent  
With the fair dower of spring grown opulent!"

### XXXIX

#### IN DUSKY ALLEYS

In dusky alleys where the rose, the rose is overblown  
Whose perfume makes the dewy air its own,  
Where, large and white, from dazzling height o'er height  
The stars lean down into the silent night,  
Like some sad flower that blooms and drops unknown  
I wait, unto sweet Love indifferent grown.

If Love had met me when the rose, the rose, was young,  
And stars in morning skies divinely sung,  
If Love had met me loitering by the strand,  
Or lent across the slippery ford a hand,  
Or cried, "Sweetheart, one precious moment stay!"  
Should I have had the will to say him nay?

But since the rose, the rose, drops tarnished, overblown,  
And every leaf the autumn winds dethrone,  
Since Love forgets the way unto my door,  
I watch and wait his coming nevermore,—  
No beggar lives so hunger-hurt, alone,  
As I to whom Love once denied my own.

## XL

### LILAC CHAINS

Let us make a necklace of the lilac flower—  
The sun will not be setting yet for full an hour;  
All that lilacs know of songs and stars and showers  
Shall be surely threaded on this chain of ours.

Beads of white and purple—rose and amethyst—  
Rains have dripped upon them, happy winds have  
kissed;  
Slipping through our fingers on this silken string,  
Sha'n't we catch the magic of the early spring?

Catch the bluebird's whistle and the robin's cheer,  
Catch the trick of blooming with the blooming  
year,  
Catch the frolic spirit of the winds that bring  
Over miles of country hints of blossoming?

Amber may be fragrant, so is sandal-wood,  
But I wouldn't change them, even if I could:  
Ah me! am I dreaming? Twenty years have  
passed  
Since I strung a necklace of the lilacs last!

## XLI

### SONG (3)

The very stars will rise and swing,  
More radiant censors in the air,  
No shadow fall on anything,  
The red rose paint itself more fair,  
So brief the hours, divine their sum,  
When love is come, when love is come.

Beauty will fail from earth and sky,  
Fragrance and song will lose their dower,  
The world in dark eclipse will lie,  
And all things wither in that hour  
When still the heart beats on and on,  
And love is gone, and love is gone.

## FANTASIA

Once, in a garden quite secluded,  
Over which the sunbeams brooded,  
By the breath of roses haunted,  
Where the hollyhocks were planted,

Reigned a swarm of butterflies.

All the place was their dominion,  
Sporting there on snowy pinion,

Underneath the summer skies;

For they had no thought of sorrow,  
Knew they not the way to borrow

Trouble from a dim surmise.

Sooth, the rose was their pavilion,  
Where they danced a weird cotillon,  
And the tulip's rich vermillion

Served for royal draperies;

And the great blue garden-spiders  
Were their coachmen and outriders,

Just according to their size.

All the winds were sweet with clover,

And the bees hummed everywhere,  
While the nightingale sang over

Every eve his love-lorn air;

Never were there wingèd mortals

Happier than these butterflies,  
Once they burst their silken portals

Into this warm paradise.

And they spoke unto each other—

“All this pleasant world is ours,

Straight descended through our mother

All these fountains, all these flowers,

All these dew-delighted grasses,

Over which the sunlight passes,

Over which the twilight lowers.”

No one answered, "Sweet, my brothers,  
Unto us, and to no others,  
Do you think the world belongs?  
Just across the wall there truly  
Where the cabbage-plants are set,  
In the kitchen-garden duly  
We were born; you quite forget,  
When, as little worms, we crept  
Up the mossy-scented wall;  
Wove our cradles soft, and slept  
Just within the robin's call;  
Till one day we burst our fetters,  
Glad to know ourselves on wing  
And stole out among our betters,  
Finding life a different thing!"

## SOLDIERS' GRAVES

### I

About tall headstones where the grass  
growing,  
The flowers of spring are fair,—  
Just the handful the month is blowing,  
Not a red rose among them all,  
Only the wild-flowers fine and small,  
Which faithful hands brought there.

Over the nameless graves that are lying  
Under the southern sun,  
Perhaps no tender soul with sighing  
Drops leaf or blossom or spray;  
But Nature herself makes holiday,  
Remembering every one.

### II

O blossoming-time, make no delay  
Paint the swift hours the while they stay,  
Let catkins of the willow lead  
The way for each fair flowering weed,  
The strange blooms of the cornel-tree  
The scarlet of the maple key,  
Let leaf and bud and grass betray  
That April brightens into May!  
With flags the watery ways enrich,  
Plant the great trillium in its niche,  
Deep in the tangled woods awhile  
Let the pale may-flower shyly smile.  
Hasten from out your beds of mould  
O sweet "spring blossoms with your gold,  
And lend your sweetness and your bloom  
To gild the shadow of the tomb.

### III

The wind-flower blossomed long ago,  
The crocus could not wait,  
The homely doorstone rose is slow,  
The milk-white stock is late.

Then bring the wreaths of cherry blooms  
The eyebright's tender shine,  
The purple lilac's perfumed plumes,  
And the splendor of columbine.

Bring violets for the graves that grow  
Green with the growing years,  
Bring all the fragrant buds that blow  
Wet with a nation's tears.

## WATER LILIES

Lilies opening without warning,  
Lilies blown this blessed morning,  
Scented with the wild night dew,  
Drenched with sunshine, through and  
through;—  
Dreams of places where they grow,  
Nestle in their hearts, I know.

Silent-pools, along whose edges,  
Droop the flag flowers, bend the sedges,  
Dear companions of their pleasure,  
Anchored in eternal leisure,—  
Pools, where stars look down and smile  
On my lilies, mile on mile.

There, the echoes haunt the rushes,—  
Ghosts of sound, misleading thrushes,  
With a hundred mellow gushes;—  
There, the pink azalea flushes,—  
In their hearts my lilies keep,  
All these memories, safe asleep.

## CHORAL

Summer is in the air, odors are everywhere;  
Idle birds are singing loud and clear;  
Brooks are bubbling over; heads of crimson clover  
On the edges of the field appear.

All the meadow blazes with buttercups and daisies,  
And the very hedges are tangles of perfume;  
Butterflies go brushing, all their plumage crushing.  
In among this wilderness of bloom.

The thorn-flower bursts its sheath, the bramble  
hangs a wreath,  
And blue-eyed grasses beckon to the sun;  
While gypsy pimpernel waits eager to fortell  
When rainy clouds are gathering one by one.

The very world is blushing, is carolling and gush-  
ing  
Its heart out in a melody of song;  
While simple weeds seem saying, in grateful trans-  
port praying,  
“Unto Him our praises all belong!”

## A LULLABY

Hush, hush, rest my sweet;  
Rest, rest thy tired feet;  
Forget the storms and tears of thy brief hours;  
There's naught shall thee distress,  
Wrapt in sleep's blissfulness,  
Crowned by a dream, something as fair as flowers.

Hush, dearest, hush;  
May no intruder brush  
From off thy bloomy cheek the downy kiss;  
May no inquiet fly  
Go rudely buzzing by  
To snatch away thy dear unconscious bliss.

May dreams enchanted spread  
A pillow for thy head,  
And hang a curtain 'twixt thee and the sun;  
While smiles shall overflow  
Thy rosy lips as though  
The angels' whisper were too sweet for one.

Then, sleep, my baby dear;  
Yet, lest the traitor, Fear,  
Should cry, "The child will waken nevermore!"  
Stir in thy dreams anon,  
Bidding the thought begone,  
And lift thine eyes to bless me as before!

## SINGING

Rock in the wind, little nest;  
When you are full life is best;  
Soon enough wings will be grown,  
Flutter, and leave you alone.

Rock in the wind, little nest;  
Say, what are storms to the blest?  
Though you should tremble and fall  
God cares for sparrows and all.

Rock, little nest; like a song  
All the sweet days fleet along;  
Winter will presently come,  
Making you vacant and dumb!

## HER FIRST SNOW

Drop gentle snowflakes, one by one:  
Be not afraid of the noonday sun.  
Build up your palaces, crystal-white,  
Aladdin-like, in a single night.  
Hide the old fences under your veil;  
Cover the dimples of hill and of dale;  
Let not the trees go naked, but place  
On their shining limbs a web of your lace.  
Visit the martin-house, if you will,  
Or lodge all night on my window-sill;  
Call on the well-sweep, and wreath it about  
With fringes, as well as the water-spout.  
Give to the door-bell a fleecy cap;  
Lend the salt hay-cocks an ermine wrap:  
And drift just enough to make the world look  
As if it had stepped from a fairy-book.

“Yes,” said the Snowflakes, “it’s time we  
should rally,  
To tuck in the roots of the grass,  
To shine on the hill-top and whiten the valley  
And touch the world up as we pass.  
All the huts that are ruined and ugly  
Let us change into marble halls,  
We will cover the naked hedges up snugly,  
And festoon the ragged stone walls.  
We will build our drifts on the king’s highway,  
Mimic the shape of star or feather,  
We will silently waltz the livelong day,  
Or sculpture garlands together.  
Never, outside of the spider’s loom,  
Shall be spun such gauzes as ours,  
And never, after the summer’s bloom,  
Shall be seen such wonderful flowers.”

## THE VALENTINE

What shall we send the baby?  
A picture of cherub or flower,  
Of garlands of grasses, may be,  
Or the sun looking out of a shower?

But no flower that blows is so sweet  
As she, with her smile grown bolder,  
And no cherub's grace so complete,  
Even with wings at the shoulder.

So,—lean your face down while I speak,  
We will send the baby just this,—  
Though 'twas stolen first from your cheek,  
St. Valentine sends her a kiss.

## THREE

Three baby birds on the wing;  
Where did they learn how to sing?  
Who, do you think, taught them how  
To fly from their nest on a bough?

Three baby buds on the stem;  
Who can it be fashioned them  
Out of the black garden mould,  
Rose-tinted, fold upon fold?

Three baby stars in the sky;  
How did they climb up so high?  
What is the power divine,  
That made them twinkle and shine?

## IN THE SHOWER

Shine out, summer sun, and behold  
The glories of meadow and hill,  
King-cups and trefoils manifold,  
Raspberry vines, at their own sweet will  
Straggling about through grassy ways,  
Making the most of the summer days,  
Strawberry blossoms, pallid as snow,  
Sweetbrier roses all ablow,  
Gay blue flags at the water's edge  
Playing hide and seek with the sedge,  
Delicate ferns, in shady places,  
Drifts of white and golden daisies,  
Rosy garlands of hollyhocks,  
Scented gillyflowers on their stalks,  
Tiny plumes of the mignonette,  
Pansies, with their eyes still wet.  
Shine out, O sun, and discover  
The dragon-fly on the clover,  
The goldchafer hid in the rose,  
And the lilies' odorous snows,  
The spider's web, which the dew  
With gems braids through and through.  
Shine out, O sun, once again  
For a charm to banish the rain.

## REST

“Hush, darling, and close your eyes;  
Little birds are asleep in their nest,  
Little stars are white in the skies.  
Hush, baby, and take your rest.

“Hush, darling, the winds are still,  
Rose and lily are hanging their heads;  
All the sweet blossoms at morning will  
Open afresh in their dewy beds.

“Through the twilight and darkness deep,  
Rest, though my arms may not infold you  
One, who knows neither slumber nor sleep,  
In stronger clasp than mine shall hold you.’

I sang. And slowly the dawn of day  
Silvered the sky, and fields, and river;  
But the baby had fled, in his sleep, away  
Into eternal arms, forever!

Then sleep on, baby, and take your rest;  
Yours was the life of a flower, but they  
Who dwell forever among God's blest  
Find a thousand years but a day.

## THE MOTHER BIRD

Deep in a leafy dell we found—  
When early summer wove her crown—  
A bird's-nest on the mossy ground,  
From blooming bough blown down.

Five pearly eggs, quite warm and white,  
Were waiting for the brooding wing,  
That from each shell there might take flight  
A bird, to trill and sing.

The mother sat and grieved apart;  
Her song had no rejoicing note.  
The sorrow of her wounded heart  
Seemed sobbing in her throat.

She thought of all the summer days,  
With their sweet sunshine, yet to come;  
Of fledglings echoing God's praise,  
While only hers were dumb;

She dreamed that all the wood must miss  
The melody that might have been.  
The wind had robbed the world of bliss  
It had been glad to win.

## THE OPENING FLOWER

It grew, by hope and care attended,  
From winter winds and frosts defended  
    While baby made a heaven on earth.  
The season long it still delayed  
To burst in bloom, as though afraid  
    Of perishing at birth.

One morn, when April skies were weeping  
Above our baby's peaceful sleeping,  
    A flower, at early light,  
Blossomed, we thought, to typify  
Our darling's morning, gloriously  
    Breaking beyond our sight.

## AN EMPTY NEST

Hidden by green grasses tall,  
Close beside the orchard wall,  
A little sparrow built.  
Laden boughs tossed overhead,  
Apple blossoms, white and red,  
Which their odor spilt.

Sweeter home could not be found,  
Should one search the green earth round  
Than this sparrow chose.  
Neighborly the clover grew;  
There the strawberry thickly blew,  
White as winter snows.

Wandering sunbeams found it out,  
When the grasses blew about  
In each little breeze;  
Fireflies, too, with flickering spark,  
Seemed to blossom after dark  
In among the trees.

Three bare, shivering little things,  
Waiting for their promised wings,  
Made the home complete.  
What a life it was to live—  
Summer long to take and give  
Just love's sweet for sweet!

Then, what melody divine  
Soon would bubble, clear and fine,  
From each little breast!  
What loud praise of flower or fern,  
Rains that drench and suns that burn,  
Liquidly confessed!

But the strawberries ripened soon;  
Every brood had found its tune,  
    Every bird its wing;  
Yet the three small sparrows left  
In the stone wall's mossy cleft,  
    Had not learned to sing!

Not a trill of bursting bloom,  
Nodding grass or ferny plume,  
    From the nest ran over;  
All the summer passed unsung  
By three sparrows, dead, among  
    The rank and fragrant clover!

## THE GOLDEN-ROD

When autumn reddens the hills,  
And lights up the secret wood,  
Sings in the babbling rills,  
And broods in a hazy mood,—

The golden-rod waits in the mead,  
Her torch illumining the way  
Where the mallows, going to seed,  
Lose their bloom day by day.

O, golden flower of the year,  
Where do you gather your light?  
What rustling winds do you hear,  
Telling the secret in flight?

From the sunshine that we have missed  
Was woven a gown for you,  
And the air was the warp, I wist,  
From which your beauty grew.

What wondrous power do you guess,  
Could fashion so fair a rod,  
Wreathed with such loveliness,  
In the bountiful thought of God?

## TURNING BROWN

The earth is turning brown, dear,  
The earth is turning brown;  
The birds, full-grown, have already flown,  
And the leaves are whirling down.  
There's no green grass in the lane, child,  
There are no red berries in the wood;  
The world is no longer at Spring, child,  
It has chosen another mood.

Yet think you Nature loves not as well  
Her season of dumb repose?  
Think you she misses the bluebird's swell,  
The robin's trill, the thrush's thrill,  
Or even the fragrant rose?  
I trow she knows that the drifting snows  
Are good for the dreaming flowers;  
That Spring doth borrow a hint from the  
sorrow  
Of these bare, brown Autumn hours.

## THANKSGIVING

Let us thank Him for the rose  
Which the summer season lends;  
For each blade of grass that grows,  
And the sunshine that He sends;

For the daisies' drift of snow,  
And the sunflowers' golden shields;  
For the strawberry-plants that sow  
Small white stars throughout the fields

For the thistle's purple crown,  
And the hawkweed's yellow hood;  
For the crocus in its gown,  
And the wild bird in the wood;

For the milkweed, spilling out  
All its hoard of silken skeins;  
For the brooks that sing and shout  
Louder after heavy rains;

For the stars that nightly rise,  
All the heavens brimming;  
For the rainbow in the skies,  
And the crickets' hymning.

Thank Him for the red leaf's glow,  
For the vine's increase,  
For the promise of the snow,  
And the wide world's lease!

## FROST FLOWERS

While we are sleeping, stealthily creeping,  
They come, as the green comes in early spring;  
Here there's a vine or root, here shows a tender  
shoot;  
Faintest of posies, of ghostly roses,  
Within this garden are blossoming.

What busy sprite, at the dead of the night,  
Scatters the seeds of these magical weeds?  
Frond of lily and flower of gilly,  
Breathing out only an odor chilly,  
Ferns that keep in their sculptured sleep  
A memory of June's warm, spicy noons,  
Of her starlit hollows and building swallows,  
Of her waxing and waning moons?

But now that summer's smile has fled,  
And all of her pomp and bloom lies dead,  
Is it the souls of her flowers, again,  
That reappear on my window pane,  
Blooming at night in a splendor of white,  
To fade away in the strong sunlight?

## OFFERINGS

Such costly treasure the wise men gave,  
To the baby in Palestine;  
Burnished gold, which mayhap some slave  
Unearthed from a sunless mine,  
Myrrh and frankincense, rare and fine,  
Nothing of theirs too good or sweet,  
To lay at the baby's feet.

What do we offer our Lord in heaven?  
Frankincense of holy thought?  
Wrongs forgiven seventy times seven  
Loving kindness rendered for naught,  
Deeds, precious as gold the Magi brought?  
Nothing of ours too costly or sweet,  
To lay at His wounded feet.

## A BURDEN

What did you bring to us, Old Year?  
Many a hope and many a fear?  
Smiles a few, but many a tear?  
Many a heartache for days together,  
Many a taste of frosty weather?  
Many a wish ungratified,  
Many a happiness denied?  
But you brought us, too, the rosy day,  
Let its troubles be what they may;  
The hollow night, whose planets climb  
Pathways older, perhaps, than Time;  
The sunset's lingering, fading flush  
And the twilight's eloquent hush;  
And baby moon, like a sweet surprise,  
Leaning out of the western skies.  
You brought the dawn, with its filmy light  
Woven out of the infinite;  
The early anemone in the wood,  
And all the delicate sisterhood;  
The pink mayflower in its hiding-places,  
And the pale Linnæa's tender graces;  
The blood root, with its crimson stain,  
And the lonesome whippoorwill's refrain.  
Out of your treasure-house you brought  
The season's tapestries, enwrought  
With wild and beautiful devices,  
And fragrant with all fragrant spices;  
The scarlet and gold of the autumn-leaf,  
The corn in the ear, the wheat in the sheaf  
The witchery of the snow, that weaves  
After the pattern of stars and leaves,  
And the light that never from land or sea  
Borrowed half of its poetry.

## FORGETFULNESS

She died full twenty years ago;  
Her lover drew his breath to weep:  
Her grave is overgrown. And so  
He giveth His beloved sleep.

The marble slab in ruin lies:  
The mound has sunken year by year;  
But one to her are smiles or sighs,  
Or steps that linger near.

Neglected died the sweet-brier rose  
Her lover set, with eyes still wet,  
Forgotten like his early woes,  
Untended by regret.

The seasons wax, the seasons wane,  
She does not mark their constant flow;  
Nor sun, nor snow, nor summer rain  
Delights the heart below.

The noises from the village street,  
The stir about the homes beneath,  
Come borne unto her still retreat  
By winds that idly breathe.

She has no part in anything  
That makes the pulses thrill and beat,  
No part in what the days may bring  
Of bitter or of sweet.

Long since her lover lost his way  
To that green mound where roses grew  
Long since he wiped his tears away,  
And ceased to make ado.

But still the wild-flowers tangle there  
Among the ferns that grow knee-deep;  
The bird builds and the bees hum where  
He giveth His beloved sleep.

## WHICH IS BEST?

To feel that heaven were not heaven without her,  
That where she is not 'twere sad to be;  
That all sweet fancies blossom about her,  
And she lends enchantment to land and sea;  
That sunlight is shadow where she does not shine,  
And pain for her sake a rapture divine?

To know that the ground you tread on she blesses,  
At the sound of your voice all her pulses stir;  
That no language or glance or touch confesses  
The half of the love that abides in her;  
That sweet things are bitter which you do not  
share,  
Hope a delusion, and life a despair?

## THE CONFESSION

Through birchen woods the sun let down  
A crowd of golden rays;  
On Nature's face there was no frown  
That fairest of fair days;  
When my love she said, bending her head,  
While a blush her cheek did cover,  
"Through dark days and fair, through hope and  
despair,  
I shall love you well, oh, my lover!"

The lark sang from his cloud above,  
Rapt in an ecstasy;  
The bird on the bough twittered of love,  
And the winds did seem to sigh.  
"Oh, my love," I said, o'er her bended head,  
While the blush her cheek did cover,  
"In weal or in woe, only love, we know,  
Can love's counterpart discover!"

Well, love, like the wind, it comes and goes,  
And who shall dare complain  
If the lover's heart, like a summer's rose,  
Blossom never again?  
The lark that sang his clouds among  
In no wise did surpass  
The heavenly note that died in my throat  
To the murmur of "Alas!"

Is it not enough that the open rose  
Takes the sun to its heart,  
Though every angry gale that blows  
Tear its frail leaves apart?  
Is it not enough, is it not enough  
(Oh, heart, thy sighing smother!),  
That I'd rather be wronged, love, by thee  
Than righted by another?

## A PICTURE

Her eyes are fairer than the light  
    Of stars that shine the clouds between  
On summer eves, when in their flight  
    The planets out of heaven lean.

Her cheek is fairer than the rose  
    That blushes in the warm June sun,  
And all its spicy soul bestows  
    The wandering winds upon.

Her smile is like the flickering rays  
    Which coruscate across the night,  
And set the Northern skies ablaze  
    With far-reflected light.

Her words are like the gems that fell  
    From fabled lips in fairy lands;  
And be it with me ill or well,  
    Lies in her two white hands.

Her voice is like the singing brooks,  
    Like summer gales the pines among;  
All heaven for me is in her looks,  
    And life or death upon her tongue!

## CAPRICE

He said, one spring, that ere the days  
Grew warm, and summer twilights long,  
And roses set the world ablaze,  
And every bird had learned its song—

Ere fields with scented ferns were sweet,  
And lily petals all uncurled—  
That he would teach a heart to beat  
For him alone of all the world.

But when the rose had bloomed and blushed,  
And silence followed the birds' tune,  
He gave the heart back, torn and crushed,  
That learned to love too soon.

## LOVE AND ROSES

The roses climbed the garden wall,  
And blushed in sweet profusion;  
From blooming boughs the birds let fall  
A musical confusion.

The twilights there were fine and sweet,  
And fair the summer weather,  
And she who made my world complete  
Sweeter than all together.

The evening star shone overhead;  
The grass with dew-drops glistened;  
One scarce had heard the words we said  
Who jealously had listened:  
Love's language is not writ, I wot,  
Only in tender speeches;  
By many a smile or glance 'tis taught,  
That through the ages reaches!

The roses now have lost their leaves,  
Though thorny tendrils climb there;  
The dew-drenched grass is bound in sheaves  
And early falls the rime there;  
No echo of a bird I hear  
Through the deserted closes:  
Faded and dead within the year  
Lie Love and the June roses.

## THE PROPHECY

They sat on the beach till the tide was full  
And the fishing boats returned,  
And looked where the breakers were white as wool,  
Where the light-house beacon burned.

“To-morrow,” he said—“to-morrow I’ll be  
Sailing beyond the bar,  
Out on the sad and desolate sea,  
Beyond reach of that lonesome star.

“The wind shall beckon and be my friend—  
Blow, merry breezes, blow!—  
But through life and death, and unto the end,  
You are mine in spite of your ‘No!’

“You shall wake at night from a dream of delight  
And list to the breakers’ tone,  
Where you’ll seem to hear a voice once dear  
Imploring again for its own.

“You shall start with fright at the fall of night  
As you walk—not alone—on the sand,  
Should a heedless wave disclose a grave  
There at your feet where you stand.

“Living or dead, here be it said—  
‘Tis so hard to do without you—  
You shall see my sad face in every place,  
You shall feel my presence about you.

“By the fireside’s blaze, in the long summer days  
You’ll be never again alone,  
For I shall inherit, in body or spirit,  
The heart that you call your own.”

A year had passed, when his ship at last  
Discharged its motley crew,  
And the color came to her cheeks in a flame  
When she thought what a year could do.

She stole to the shore at dusk, or before  
The stars were large in the sky,  
And cried, "Oh, my own, I am waiting alone!"  
In answer there came—a sigh!

He stood before her, her true adorer,  
One instant, only one;  
But that moment's bliss was enough for this—  
It told what a year had done!

White and wan as the sky at dawn,  
Like a trembling mist, I ween;  
He seemed to be but a breath of the sea,  
Through which the stars could be seen.

## OPPORTUNITY

She leaned out from the lattice  
At the budding of the morn,  
The sun was on the hill-tops,  
The dew was on the thorn.  
The willful climbing roses  
Above her wove a crown,  
And wreathed her queen of maidens  
As he came riding down.

He checked his horse's gallop  
And dallied by the way,  
Smiling and gazing on her,  
Loath to go and loath to stay;  
For he thought, "The sweet tomorrow  
Waits upon my delays,  
Then wherefore haste to gather  
The flower that blooms always?"

Where she blossoms I can find her  
Before the season's flight,  
Blushing beside her lattice,  
And smiling in the light.  
So shall I waste the morning,  
The dew upon the way,  
In reaching for a posy  
That opens every day?"

He passed—the sunshine with him,—  
The dew dried on the thorn,  
The roses dropped their petals  
That crowned her queen at morn.  
Yet once, when his heart was weary,  
And life of glory shorn,  
He turned him to her lattice,—  
But she and the roses were gone!

## THE FARMER'S LESSON

If I had told her in the spring  
The old, old story, briefly,  
When sparrow and robin began to sing,  
And the plowing was over, chiefly!

But haste makes waste, and the story sweet  
I reasoned, will keep through the sowing,  
Till I drop the corn, and plant the wheat,  
And give them a chance for growing.

Had I even told the tale in June,  
When the wind through the grass was  
blowing,  
Instead of thinking it rather too soon,  
And waiting till after the mowing!

Or had I hinted, out under the stars,  
That I knew a story worth hearing,—  
Lingering to put up the pasture bars,—  
Nor waited to do the shearing!

Now the barn is full, and so is the bin,  
But I've grown wise without glory,  
Since love is the crop not gathered in—  
For my neighbor told her the story!

## EMBROIDERY

All the flowers are overblown,  
All the grass is newly mown,—  
Prithee, 'tis a pity quite  
Thus to sit from morn till night,  
With a heart in nowise light,  
Thus to sit and draw my thread  
Just to earn my daily bread!  
Underneath my finger grows  
Heartsease, starts the pale primrose,—  
Ah, to them no wind that blows,  
Summer rains, nor winter snows,  
Any ruin can disclose.

While I traced these wilful vines,  
Clematis and jessamines,  
With the freakish wandering-jew,  
And the gadding ivy, too.  
While I draw my needle out,  
Straight I lose what I'm about,  
And the fields I used to know  
All their feathery reaches show,  
Blue-eyed grasses interspersed  
With dandelions gone to seed,  
Which I used to think at first  
Knew if any one had need  
Of the love that I could give,  
Of the life that I could live.  
But there can be none so poor,  
Asking alms beside my door,  
While I sit and shape my flowers  
Through the lonesome lingering hours!

In those fields we strolled together,  
He and I,—no matter whether

All the sky was overcast,  
And the wailing autumn blast  
Swept us like a ghost unguessed  
While we walked among the blest,  
In the world that has no name,  
Till, presently between us came  
A third,—ah me—I quite forgot  
Sometimes—Here waits my violet—  
One, two,—its leaves already wet—  
For now, that all the flowers are blown  
I sit and sigh and weep alone!

## THORNS AND ROSES

I went into my garden,  
When first the day was born,  
And I saw the roses blowing—  
Each rose behind a thorn;

And I said “O, Rose forgive me,  
But I really must delay  
‘Till you have no thorns to give me,  
So I’ll come another day.”

And the hours went swinging o’er us,  
Melody of bees and birds,  
Falling into minor chorus,  
Fit for any tender words,

And my heart was filled with sadness  
Such as from sweet music flows,  
‘Till I cried, “Alas, what madness,  
I had quite forgot my rose!”

Forth I fled, no more delaying:  
How I bore it, heaven knows,—  
For the tree, its thorns displaying,  
Nowhere showed a rose!

## ONLY A SOB

It was only a heart; but then  
Did you know it was yours? When  
You lightly threw it away,  
Did you dream of a reckoning day?

It was only a heart; yet  
I can never quite forget  
How you toyed with the thing for a while  
Then put it aside with a smile.

It is only a heart still—  
Do with it as you will—  
A heart that is broken in two,  
But no longer beating for you!

## FAITH

'Mid naked boughs the robin sings:  
That buds will break he is so sure;  
So sure that flowers and all sweet things  
Will blossom while the years endure.

Though cold the wind, he has no doubt  
Of warmth and comfort on the way;  
He knows that all green blades will sprout  
However late the frosts delay.

He knows, by wonderful prevision,  
That summer soon will haunt the wood,  
And bring the barren bough fruition,  
And to the empty nest its brood!

## OVER SEAS

Oh, fair the morning breaks and shines,  
With drifting cloud and rosy reach,  
Above the peaks of Apennines  
    Fairer than words of human speech;  
And fair, from Alpine height to height,  
    Voicing an awful minor strain,  
The torrents in their headlong flight,  
    Thread the stars on their silver skein.

And fair the crystal rivers creep,  
    Where softly sang the Lorelei,  
Where wraith of lord and lady keep,  
    Their ghostly state for aye and aye,  
Where ruined bowers are overgrown,  
    With many a tale of love and tears,  
Tendril and blooms of seed-pain blown,  
    From the dusty centuries' harvest years.

## THE BROOK

“O, I am tired!” said the brook, complaining,  
    “I fain would stop a little while to rest;  
The clouds would weary were they always raining;  
    The bird, if she forever built her nest!

“The stars withdraw from heaven and cease their  
    shining,  
The sun himself drops down into the west.  
I fain would stop,” the brook kept on repining,  
    “And catch my breath, and be an instant blest.

“All day a voice calls, ‘Follow, dearest, follow,’  
    And toiling on, I seek to reach the goal,  
Nor pause to list to yonder happy swallow,  
    Telling in song the secret of his soul.”

“O foolish brook!” the wind blew in replying,  
    “Am I not always with you on the wing?  
Cease your fond mourning, cease your weary  
    sighing,  
And thank your stars for such companioning!”

The sun came up across the silver awning,  
    And hung a golden flame against the sky;  
He dallied not to drink the dews of dawning,  
    And when the night fell, lo, the brook was dry!

At rest! at rest! no more of toil unceasing;  
    No watering of the roots of shrub or tree;  
No hoarding from the rain, nor still increasing,  
    To lose itself, at last, within the sea!

## DEER ISLAND'S EVENING

Softly the daylight fades on the river,  
Stars come trooping into the dark,  
Great pine boughs lean over and shiver,  
Fireflies kindle each tiny spark.

Grandly the tide bears toward the ocean,  
Obeying an impulse it may not defy,  
Sweeping us on with rhythmical motion  
Under the archway of mighty sky.

Silvery echoes answer our singing,—  
Voices of some aerial band,  
Or bells of faëry sweetly ringing  
From ruined towers of some ancient land

## WARNED

Be bold, heart, be bold!  
In the warm days of old  
Hearts were not bought and sold—  
Love was not pawned for gold!

Be wise, heart, be wise!  
Time borrows wings, and flies;  
Seek that which satisfies;  
Waste not to-day in sighs!

Be true, heart, be true!  
That which is nearest do;  
Where the seed fell it grew—  
Heart's-ease ne'er brought forth rue!

Be great, heart, be great!  
There lives no potentate  
Ruling such vast estate  
As you, in trust for Fate!

## WHEN WE WERE YOUNG

Fairer the rose blushed  
When we were young,  
Brighter spring mornings flushed  
Sweeter birds sung.  
Twilights were finer far,  
Decked with the evening star,  
Finer than day-dreams are,  
When we were young.

Fortune was kinder, then,  
When we were young;  
Love, too, was blinder, then,  
Honied of tongue.  
Friendships were all sincere,  
Pleasures were far more dear,  
And Heaven, itself, was near  
When we were young.

## ASLEEP

Sound asleep: no sound can reach  
Him who dreams the heavenly dream  
No tomorrow's silver speech  
Wake him with an earthly theme.  
Summer rains relentlessly  
Patter where his head doth lie;  
There the wild fern and the brake  
All their summer leisure take.  
Violets blinded with the dew,  
Perfume lend to the sad rue,  
Till the Day break, fair and dear,  
And no shadow doth appear.









